Coal Creek Watershed Coalition Minutes
December 8, 2005

The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. Those in attendance were: Steve Glazer, Karen Shirley, Matt Malick, L.C. Adams, John Hess, Laura Freeman, Wendy Brown, Steve Renner, Shannon Sprott, Briana Shanklin, John Scott, Mark Hatcher, and Hilary Mayes.

Agenda

1. Discuss the discharge permit. There is a 30 day comment period that ends 12/25/05. Steve welcomes comments on the permit. David Baumgarten, Laura Magner and Steve Glazer will have a meeting 12/12/05 regarding the permit. CCWC may need to hire a consultant to help interpret the permit.
2. John Scott – SVAP presentation – Stream Visual Assessment Protocol with Wendy Brown.
3. Briana Shanklin, C.U. graduate student, will discuss metals concentration tracer study

1. Discharge Permit

Gary Biers is the permit writer and chief of the permit section for the Keystone Mine Wastewater Treatment Facility. There is a 'summary of rationale' explaining the permit system in the _____.

Steve Glazer said metal standards have been changed and have not yet been adopted as basin standards. Steve questioned whether the plant is technically capable of meeting these new standards?

These standards are derived by a formula which is variable based on hardness. The permit assumes a mean hardness of 331. This was taken downstream of the effluent (0.3 miles downstream of Keystone Mine discharge). It should have been taken upstream. Is there enough data to say what the hardness is? Matt Malick had USGS records with him that stated the hardness was 67. .

Some charts are missing from the draft permit. John Hess said we must consider that the new owners may walk away if the new standards can't be met. Steve Glazer said the new owners will have to hold a class A/B discharge operators license.

A long discussion was held about the specific numbers n the permit and the consensus was that we need expertise to help interpret this permit. Steve Glazer will recommend to attorneys that we may need a consultant. Steve Renner can recommend technical people in Grand Junction and Denver (who do not work for the State of Colorado).

Another issue of concern: permit numbers are based on technology-based limits. Steve questioned why the permit numbers were technology based when the standards are based on dissolved solids?

USGS monitors at the mouth of Coal Creek. In 2003 Water Year there were 3 exceedances of standards for Cd in a 3 year period (these occurred at high water). Hardess was 67. This may not be caused by the treatment plant. Because of these exceedances, for discharge not to be in violation and because of the uncertainty of the source, the State has made temporary modifications to the standards. This expires in June, 2006.

Steve Glazer would like to submit comments with questions as to why they are basing their hardness at 331, when all the data we have suggests hardness = 67. 4 years of data should be enough to question the hardness value.

The three entities planning to submit comments on the permit are the Town of CB, Gunnison County and HCCA. We will probably file joint comments.

John Hess said we need a technical committee that needs to be set up immediately. CCWC has no money to hire a consultant. Others asked whether CCWC should approach the Town or should the Town Attorney take the lead on this? Steve Glazer opined that the Town and County should hire a consultant. The committee agreed.

Wendy Brown and Steve Renner recommended sending a letter to the State requesting an extension.

Mark Hatcher said that Phelps Dodge is still operating the plant. They are reviewing contractors to take over. Phelps Dodge will be out of the plant between now and February.

2. SVAP presentation

John Scott – presented the Coal Creek SVAP Inventory. Coal Creek was divided into reaches based on vegetative and riparian characteristics. Stream health was evaluated visually.

3. **Metals Concentration Tracer Study**

Briana Shanklin is a University of Colorado M.S. student who is conducting a metals concentration tracer study. She will be back in May/June for high flow data. Fieldwork was conducted in September, 2005 during low flow. She used LiCl to determine stream flow and hyporheic flow. The hyporheic zone includes cobbles or subsurface gravel along the streambed. The use of LiCl was inconclusive for determining flow. pH was evaluated at several locations and was very low at the Iron Fen. Zn, Cu, and Cd were analyzed along the creek for metal loading rates.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 5 at 1:30 p.m. Topics to discuss will include hiring a project coordinator and setting up a website that will be hosted by Gunnison County.